

SUBJECT: <b>Community Relations</b>	NUMBER: 1-24.01
EFFECTIVE DATE:	REVIEW DATE:
NMMLEPSC STANDARDS: ADM.21.01, ADM.21.02, ADM.22.01, ADM.22.02	APPROVED: Sheriff

## **I. POLICY**

Community involvement is essential to the operation of any law enforcement agency. The citizens are the eyes and ears of the department. Without the assistance and acceptance of the community, a Sheriff's Department cannot function effectively. All avenues must be utilized in promoting the respect and cooperation of the public with the department.

It is the policy of the Valencia County Sheriff's Department to involve all department personnel in a county-wide community relations effort. This includes working to establish an attitude that the department is an integral part of the community. Citizen participation and interaction with the deputies is necessary to achieve a condition within the community where the normal application of law enforcement may prevail. It is the policy of the department that community relations and community education is a shared effort of each and every employee.

The Valencia County Sheriff's Department is committed to the prevention of crime through educational law enforcement.

## **II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

A. To create and maintain liaison with community groups and organizations.

1. This includes exchanging information, identifying departmental service needs of the community, promoting deputy/citizen contacts, acquainting each other with mutual problems and encouraging action aimed at solving these problems.
2. Information obtained in these meetings may be used to provide direction in development or modification of department policies, procedures, and programs.

B. To educate citizens about the functions and operations of the department.

C. The department strives to provide, through established programs and the media crime awareness information and crime prevention procedures. The intent is to assist the public in reducing its victimization rate and its fear of crime.

D. To inform the public that crime prevention is a cooperative effort between the department and the citizens of Valencia County.

- E. To assist in organizing crime prevention groups in residential areas through the Neighborhood Watch Program.
- F. To present crime prevention programs and maintain liaison with diverse community groups including, but not limited to:
  - 1. The business community
  - 2. Local citizens groups:
  - 3. Local civic associations
  - 4. Church groups
  - 5. Schools
  - 6. Concerned citizens
- G. To participate in social service and criminal justice diversion programs through a variety of crime prevention programs.

### **III. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. Department Personnel
  - 1. No one can do more to foster good community relations than the employee who is in contact with the public on a day to day basis. Each employee has the responsibility to cultivate the respect and cooperation of the public in these day to day contacts. Employees must realize that their actions and demeanor every contact with a citizen has an impact on community relations.
  - 2. The department is committed to correcting actions, practices, and attitudes which may contribute to community tensions and grievances.
  - 3. It is the responsibility of all deputies of the department to provide basic crime awareness and prevention information to citizens when answering calls for service or through informal contacts.

### **IV. PROGRAMS**

- A. Crime Prevention Programs include, but are not limited to:
  - 1. Neighborhood Watch Program
  - 2. Programs of interest to business owners (ex. Shoplifting Awareness, Worthless Check procedure, Fraud information, etc.)
  - 3. Drug and Alcohol Information
  - 4. School programs
- B. Crime Prevention Programs may be presented by any deputy in the department having expertise in the area of concern. Deputies must have department approval prior to presenting any program or presentation.

- C. The deputy may also utilize individuals from the community to assist in presentation of programs.

**V. ANNUAL REPORT**

- A. Valencia County Sheriff's Department will prepare a report on an annual basis of citizens concerns, potential problems and recommendations. The report will be generated by the Captain or his designee.